

RPG Program Description and Guidelines

Research Presentation Award for Faculty-Student Research and Creative Activities Grants

Purpose of the Grants:

The purpose of these grants is to expand the opportunities for undergraduate students and faculty to work collaboratively on scholarly projects in the academic year. Research and creative activities are defined in different ways by different disciplines, but in the context of this program these endeavors might be defined as *“any intellectual, inquiry-based project undertaken by the undergraduate student that advances the knowledge of the student in an academic discipline, immerses the students in the culture of the discipline, and leads to new scholarly insights or the creation of new works that add to the wealth of the discipline.”* As part of this program the work must be done under the direction of a CofC faculty member. The RPG grants, in particular, support the dissemination of the results of collaborative efforts in an appropriate academic or professional forum. These funds cannot be used to support graduate student travel.

Faculty-student collaboration in academic research and creative works is one of the most enriching and rewarding experiences on an undergraduate campus. In fact, this activity is so important that it is becoming one of the standards of excellence by which nationally pre-eminent undergraduate institutions are measured. It is hoped that the faculty-student teams who work on these projects will serve as ambassadors of excellence both on and beyond the College of Charleston campus.

Students who participate in these projects are expected to gain a better appreciation for the nature of scholarly work. Faculty members who participate in these projects are expected to imprint understanding and love of scholarship on the students and to help the students develop skills appropriate to the discipline of the inquiry and also to develop improved communication skills.

It is expected that the faculty member will play a key role in the design and management of the project. It is required that the student will be more than an apprentice in the process, and that the student will be encouraged to provide creative input into all aspects of the process. In particular, students must have a central role in the presentation of the results of the project. It is up to the applicants to explain the nature of the student and mentor involvement in the project, as it cannot be assumed that the reviewers will know.

Who May Apply?

Each application requires at least two participants: an undergraduate student and a CofC faculty member. Preference will be given to roster faculty members, although non-roster faculty members are encouraged to apply as well. The student applicant must be a full time, degree seeking College of Charleston undergraduate student with a minimum GPA of least 2.5 in the major during the project period. Applicants who have cumulative GPAs of at least 3.0 are significantly more competitive than those with GPAs below 3.0. RPG awards are allowed for recent graduates of the College, as long as the student is enrolled on a full-time basis at the time of application. A faculty member of the College of Charleston must serve as the Principal Investigator on the project.

Amount, Purpose and Duration of the Grants:

The funds for RPG awards are limited and will be awarded by the Director on a competitive basis, based upon the recommendation of a faculty review panel and available funding. Funds are not held in reserve so that awards may be issued to worthy proposals later in the academic year. For this reason, applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible in the academic year for funding from the program.

RPG awards may only be used for travel necessary to present the results of student-faculty research and creative activity at meetings, conferences, competitions, etc. **Student applicants must have a primary role in the presentation of results. RPG funds only cover students costs associated with attending a conference or other presentation venue.** The dates of the project are flexible, but requested support for RPG projects must be within the fiscal year of application, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30th. Applications for RPG funds may include projects that occur during the Fall Semester, Spring Semester, December break, Maymester, or Summer.

The amount of the award depends on the location of the conference. For international conferences or conferences west of the Mississippi, the maximum award is \$750 per student. For national conferences east of the Mississippi, the maximum award is \$500. For regional conferences, the maximum award is \$200 per student and for state conferences, \$50 per student. Grant applicants are responsible for submitting information necessary for the review panel to judge the nature and location of the conference.

What to Submit:

1. A typed, completed hardcopy application with ALL signatures must be submitted **no later than 5pm** on the stated deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (**Trisha Folds-Bennett, 6 Green Way, 2nd Floor**).
2. A completed electronic copy (MS Word or PDF) of the entire application (signed or unsigned) must be submitted **no later than 5pm** on the stated deadline to the Director of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities at urca@cofc.edu
3. A complete unofficial copy of the student's College of Charleston transcript must be submitted with the hardcopy application. All transcripts will be scanned and uploaded by URCA program staff into the student's electronic file.
4. If applicable, copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the hardcopy application. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are verified.

When to Apply:

For the 2009-2010 academic year, RPG materials may be submitted before 5 pm on the appropriate date indicated below:

- September 4, 2009
- November 6, 2009
- January 22, 2010
- March 12, 2010*
- June 30, 2010**

*Funds awarded during this round of review must be expended before June 30, 2010.

**For presentations that will occur between July 1, 2010 and October 1, 2010 (i.e., in the 2010-2011 fiscal year), proposals should be submitted for the June 30th decision cycle.

Under no circumstances will late applications be accepted. For an application to be considered on time and complete, both the FINAL electronic and hardcopy must be submitted by 5pm on the deadline. Faculty members should note that signatures by the department chair and school dean are required; therefore, an appropriate amount of time should be set aside for their review before the deadline. The URCA program staff will not be responsible for ensuring that chairs and deans complete their review by the deadline; this is the responsibility of the submitting faculty member.

Proposal Review Process:

A committee made up of faculty representatives from all Schools of the College will evaluate the proposals; it should be assumed that the reviewers are *not* knowledgeable about the specific content area of the proposed work. It generally takes about three weeks after submission of an application for notification of the final status of an application.

The reviewers will be asked to assess each application using the following criteria:

- Intellectual and academic merit of the project
- Quality of the conference/presentation forum
- Role of the student in the presentation of results
- Value of the experience for the student
- Quality of writing in proposal (e.g., sophistication of sentence structure, grammatical precision, absence of careless errors)
- Academic preparation of the student to conduct the project
- Motivation of the student
- Appropriateness of the budget

Proposal Preparation:

(1) Complete the application cover page. The signatures required do not reflect approval or recommendation for funding; they merely attest to the accuracy of the administrative details.

(2) **Project Description:** The quality (both in terms of content and in terms of mechanics) of the project description will be a primary criterion in the evaluation of the application; therefore, students and faculty mentors are strongly advised to work collaboratively on the writing of the description. **Any descriptions over the prescribed word limits will not be eligible for funding.**

The Project Description should include:

(A) **Non-Technical Project Abstract:** This section must be written by the student, but should be reviewed by the faculty mentor for its accuracy and appropriateness. The abstract should be written in 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, single spaced, and should be no more than 150 words in length). The student must provide a brief description of the nature of the research project or creative work that has been completed and the results of which will be presented at the conference. The abstract should be written in a tone appropriate for a general academic

audience so that it is understandable to scholars from outside the discipline of the proposed project. The technical abstract submitted to the conference review committee may be attached as an appendix to the application; however, it will not suffice as the description and justification of the project.

(B) **Student Statement of Intent:** This section must be written by the student. The statement should be written in 12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, single spaced, and should be no more than 200 words in length. In it, the student should describe the focus of the presentation and the forum in which the presentation will be made. The student should also address the importance of the presentation to his or her academic and career development.

(C) **Roles Statement:** This statement should be written by the mentor. (12 pt font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, single spaced, and no more than 150 words in length). In this statement, the faculty member should make clear the role of the student in the presentation. The faculty member's role in the presentation should also be addressed. If the student will not actually do the presentation, the faculty member must address why this is the case and provide substantial justification for the importance of having the student attend the conference/presentation forum. It is expected that the student will be formally recognized (name in program, on title, etc.) for his/her contributions to the work product being presented or exhibited. The RPG grant will fund proposals in which mentors offer very little creative input, provided that they do provide appropriate guidance and oversight. The program will also support projects in which mentors fully direct the project, as long as they seek to develop student research skills or creativity in demonstrable ways and the student is publicly acknowledged for contribution to the work product. In either case, the description must be general enough that a faculty member from any academic discipline will be able to understand the role of the student, the role of the mentor(s), and the nature of the interaction between them. It must not be assumed that the reviewers will have a common standard or concept for the best practices of mentoring undergraduate research.

(D) **Travel Information:** The dates and location of travel, name of conference/ meeting to be attended, and the title of the presentation/performance should be indicated on the form provided in the application. The level of significance that the conference/meeting has to the field of inquiry will be considered by the review panel so sufficient information for the panel to make judgments should be included. Authors, in the order listed for the conference/meeting, should be indicated. **PRESENTING AUTHOR(S) SHOULD BE IN BOLD AND ALL CAPS.** Student authors should also be indicated with an asterisk (*).

(3) **Proposed Budget:** This section should be written by the faculty mentor and should include:

A. An itemized budget **for the travel** should be presented using the form included in the application. Only student travel costs are allowable; support for faculty travel should NOT be included. For international conferences or conferences west of the Mississippi, the maximum award is \$750 per student. For national conferences east of the Mississippi, the maximum award is \$500. For regional conferences, the maximum award is \$200 per student and for state conferences, \$50 per student. **ORGA** *per diem* and mileage rates should be used as needed. Multiple applicants will be expected to carpool when possible.

B. Each budget item for which support from the URCA program is requested must be specifically justified as necessary to the success of the project. If the total travel costs for the student exceed the RPG award limit then description of how the excess will be funded, whether from

another award or departmental funding, must be included. The status (i.e., funded/pending, project dates) of this additional funding should be indicated.

Allowable costs supported by the URCA program are:

Student travel expenses directly related to the dissemination of project results

The following expenses are NOT allowed:

Student travel that is not related to dissemination of results

Faculty travel

Any other project expenses outside of travel to present results of scholarly work

(4) **Transcript:** Attach a complete unofficial copy of the student's College of Charleston transcript. Transcripts should only be included with the hardcopy application. URCA staff will scan and upload them to include with the electronic copy to be reviewed by URCA committee members.

(5) **IRB/IACUC:** If applicable, copies of IRB/IACUC approvals should be submitted with the hardcopy application. Grant funds will not be transferred until all approvals are received.